

## **The Tabernacle in the Wilderness**

GOD's Marvelous Revelations Concerning Sin and Death  
and  
The Divinely Provided Way of Salvation

by Bruce Corbin

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### **CHAPTER FOUR -**

#### **THE ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING**

EXODUS 27:1-8; 31:9; 38:1; 40:6-29

As indicated in the ground-plan of the court of the Tabernacle, at a point one-fourth of the distance from the Gate to the West fence, was located the "Altar of Burnt-Offering." Reference to the passages cited above will disclose that this was the inspired designation given to this very important part of the furnishings of the court and of the Tabernacle. It first greeted the eyes of those who passed by the vari-colored curtain of the outer barrier. The altar is often referred to as the "Brazen Altar," or as the "Altar of the Lord," and is best understood in harmony with its purpose and use.

It was heavily constructed of acacia-wood, over-laid with a thick covering of brass. The solidity and stability of the altar may be judged by remembering that it withstood destruction by fierce fires, kept burning constantly, and by the ravages of time, for a period of considerably beyond 400 years. The altar was foursquare, seven and one-half feet across each way. Its height was four and one-half feet. Around the top was an ornamental coping, designed to prevent anything falling to the ground. It is strongly indicated that at the base, at least on one side, was a ramp, upon which the priests stood as they ministered at the altar.

Inside the side-walls, 27 inches above the ground, was a projection, somewhat like a shelf, which supported the four sides of a heavy, brass grating, upon which the fires were kindled and where the burnt-offering were consumed. From the four corners of this grating heavy rings projected, which passed through at right angles to the side-walls. Through these rings were thrust staves, made of acacia-wood, also covered over with brass, serving as handles by which the altar was moved and carried, when Israel journeyed from camp to camp.

#### **HORNS STAND FOR POWER**

On each outer corner, at the top of the altar, was a projection, fashioned like the horns of a bullock. These four horns were deeply imbedded in the side walls and covered with brass, in one

piece with the brass covering both the inside and outside of the altar. These horns are often mentioned in the Scriptures, and are still found in the nomenclature of the Church. Years ago, when some preachers, and more of the saints, were mighty in prayer and revivals were prayed down, how often was heard that old-fashioned expression, "they laid hold of the horns of the altar, and shook things." Would that those experiences of the mighty power of GOD might be manifest in the churches today!

Before this altar was ever put to use, every part of it was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice SEVEN TIMES. This signified that the altar was completely and wholly set apart and consecrated solely to symbolize what, in the New Testament, had fulfillment, and was filled with meaning, by the death of the Son of GOD on Calvary's Cross. While in PART II we shall give due consideration to the offices and ministrations of the priests and to the sacrifices which they offered in behalf of the people, we shall best understand the place and meaning of the altar of burnt-offering and its place in the sinner's approach to GOD, and in Christian experience, by devoting the rest of this chapter to unfolding the hideousness of sin, the infinite cost of our redemption, and what was accomplished on the Cross and made possible and available to every repentant seeker desiring REAL salvation.

The churches of America are filled with folks who know little, if anything, in their own personal experience, of the mighty "Power in the Blood", shed for them on the Cross, and so wonderfully symbolized by the altar of burnt-offering, of which we are now learning. So let us consider, step by step, the meaning of these symbols.

### **THE ALTAR STANDS FOR THE CROSS**

The altar, itself, is a symbol of the Cross. The acacia wood symbolizes the pure, strong, indestructible humanity of JESUS CHRIST. The brass here, as elsewhere, represents the judgments of GOD upon all sin. The altar almost shouts to an unsaved world: "HE IS ABLE!" He was able to bear our sins and iniquities, and once for ALL, He did bear them on the Cross. "He took our sins away." The suppliant sinner laid his hand on the head of the living sacrifice, before its blood was shed, thus identifying himself with that sacrifice, then he watched its blood gush out, an atonement for his own, individual sins; then the sacrifice was laid on the raging fire and consumed into nothingness. The Divine revelation of GOD's plan of salvation, undeniably and incontrovertibly, if believed, brings absolute assurance that there IS power in the blood of CHRIST completely to atone for, cover, and blot out all our sins forevermore.

"What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of JESUS." Here are four out of hundreds of wonderful promises which GOD makes concerning our sins, when we confess them, and sincerely repent and forsake them, and accept Him who died for us, as OUR Saviour. **"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee"** (Isaiah 44:22). **"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"** (Micah 7:19). **"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back"** (Isaiah 38:17). **"I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins"** (Isaiah 43:25). **"As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us"** (Psalm 103:12). What further assurance could anyone ask? BELIEVE AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED!

## UNIVERSAL SALVATION

The four horns on the corners of the altar pointed to the four points of the compass, so, to the four corners of the earth. CHRIST's death on the Cross, expressed the love of GOD for all mankind. For **"For God so loved the WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16). Not only so, but the power, symbolized by these four horns sprinkled with blood, speaks of the efficacy and power of this God-wrought salvation, unto all who will look unto CHRIST and be saved.

However, there are several things which must be clearly discerned and understood. Since the altar of burnt offering signifies the price that CHRIST paid for our redemption, and the finished work which He wrought FOR US on the Cross, it is of the utmost importance to know what He there made possible for us. Four words admirably express these things wrought for us . . . Redemption, Remission, Propitiation, and Justification. Let us discover their meanings. But first let us study GOD's inspired portrait of the unredeemed sinner. It is not a pretty picture. **"There is none good, no, not one."** **"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"** (Romans 1:18).

If we read on to the third chapter, we find that the Word of GOD holds the mirror up before the sinner and shows him how he looks in the sight of GOD. So also the altar of burnt-offering and the Cross shows us the hideousness of our sins, and also the inescapable fact that, since **"the wages of sin is death,"** and **"without the shedding of blood is no remission,"** we must pay the penalty for our sins, or accept the only way of Redemption and Salvation, which was wrought for us by JESUS CHRIST on the Cross, as typified so plainly and forcefully by the brazen altar, and its sacrifices, consumed by the flaming fires of judgment. We must pay the price, or we must be redeemed. "JESUS paid it all, all the debt I owe."

By now, it should be clear that to be redeemed is to be delivered by the paying of a price. As used in the Word, "redemption" relates to the freeing of a slave, by paying for him in the slave-market. Redemption means far more. It sets completely free forever, with no thought of returning to bondage. The altar and the Cross speak of absolute deliverance from sin, the penalty for sin, and the power of sin, all attested to by the witness of the HOLY SPIRIT: **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"** (Romans 8:2).

## OUR SINS ARE TAKEN AWAY

Remission for sin embraces the fact that the sins of the sinner are removed, taken away, covered, and remembered no more forever. It is the invariable experience of a saved person that he never even thinks of confessing sins, or repenting for them, when once they have been forgiven and taken away. If contrition for sin is found in the heart of a believer, examination will disclose that the anguish is for sins committed, since the believer was converted to CHRIST and saved. If you were indeed saved, and the HOLY SPIRIT witnessed to the fact of your salvation: **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of**

**God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us"** (Romans 8:14-18) then your sins were taken away, and the HOLY SPIRIT never recalls them. What a wonderful fact that is.

CHRIST "**is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world**" (I John 2:2). Propitiation for the sins of the sinner and for the sinner himself is based upon the fact that when our sins are covered by the blood of the sacrifice for sin, who is our Saviour, GOD sees the sinner and sin, as in CHRIST, made free from the stains and guilt of sin, as well as from the penalty for sin. So GOD lifts the penalty for sin and the sinner is no longer under the penalty of death for having broken the law of GOD. Later, we shall see this more clearly, as we stand before the "mercy seat" in the Holy of Holies. We should not think of propitiation, as by any means, a way of buying off an angry GOD, but, instead, of an infinitely loving and merciful GOD, Himself, finding a way to vindicate His Holy character and His righteous laws, so that He may forgive sin and redeem the sinner, in spite of his sin, since CHRIST met every demand of the law Himself, and Himself paid the penalty for all who have broken GOD's laws in every realm and of every nature.

### **WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**

Lastly, we are justified by faith . . . "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**" So far as GOD's righteousness and the justification of the sinner are concerned the two words are inseparable. Without justification, the sinner cannot become righteous in the sight of GOD; for self-righteousness is as a filthy garment before GOD. Such God-given righteousness is through faith and the acceptance of CHRIST, by whom we are justified, or reckoned righteous; when, being in CHRIST, GOD looks upon His Holy Son to whom we belong, because He purchased us with His own blood, and in His name and for His sake, He accepts us as ONE with CHRIST, forevermore. So the justified believer is as one, who, for his sins, has been brought before the Judge, only to find that the case has been settled, and a complete pardon covers the accusations before the law, and there is nothing against him; just as though nothing had ever appeared on the records. That is what CHRIST did for us when He justified us, and, when by faith we took Him as our all in all.

Before we conclude this chapter, there is one thing we must not miss. Please notice that the altar of burnt offering and the Cross symbolize and speak of the ministry of CHRIST, embracing what He has done FOR sinners, in making POSSIBLE their deliverance from all that is entailed through sin.

This is indicated by its location, just within the Gate of the court of the Tabernacle. What CHRIST has wrought FOR us is merely the beginning of the way that leads to Eternal Glory.

Millions of professing Christians, even here in America, never go further in understanding what are their privileges in CHRIST, or in personal Christian experience. They make the rounds of the "stations of the Cross," but fail to grasp the true significance of the wonderful interpretation and application of the teaching concerning the Tabernacle, found in Hebrews 4:9-5:10; 6:1; 9:1-28. Please grasp the KEY to this wonderful exposition of the symbolism of the Tabernacle and its

priesthood, and obey its more urgent exhortations, each beginning with the words, "LET US."  
The most important of which, at this moment, is "LET US GO ON" (Hebrews 6:1).

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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